(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) to what extent this move will allow IOC to cover its freight bill;

(d) by when the other public sector oil refining and marketing companies will be allowed to hire tankers; and

(e) how would the move affect the revenue of transchart, the Centralised Chartering Ship Wing of Shipping Corporation of India?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The world over, major oil companies have their in-house shipping arrangements. Private sector oil companies in India are also free to have their own shipping arrangements. In a deregulated scenario, public sector oil companies have to compete in the market and, therefore, a level playing field between private and public sector oil companies has to be ensured. Therefore, IOCL have been permitted to charter their own tankers for importing crude.

(c) The move will cover the entire freight bill of IOCL on crude import.

(d) Government is not considering any such move for the present.

(e) The Ship Chartering Wing of the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways is not charging any commission or service fee for chartering foreign flag vessels. However, the commission of 1% is charged on freight and demurrage for Indian flag vessles.

MoU with Myanmar for co-operation in oil sector

4292. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 96 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st March, 2005 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has also signed an MoU with the Myanmar Government to enhance co-operation in the oil sector including upstream, downstream and oil marketing; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During the visit of Minister (P&NG) to Myanmar in January, 2005 an MoU was signed between India and Myanmar for cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector. The MoU envisages cooperation between the parties in the following fields:

(A) Upstream Sector:

(i) Petroleum exploration and production.

(ii) Joint participation in workshops, conferences and exhibitions aimed at attracting investment in the Petroleum Sectors of both countries;

(iii) Bilateral trade in Petroleum Sectors covering equipment supplies, work execution, service contracts including consultancy services.

(iv) Joint participation in the publication of non-confidential information derived from the activities implemented within the framework of the MoU.

(B) Downstream Sector:

(i) Cooperation in the feasibility study for infrastructure facilities in the Petroleum sectors.

(ii) Promotion for construction and maintenance of Petroleum Industry infrastructure by the interested private sector enterprises and other organizations of the Parties.

(C) Marketing Sector:

(i) Promotion of cross border trading in the petroleum products by the interested private sector enterprises and other organizations of the Parties.

(D) Others:

(i) Exchange visits of policy makers and technical experts responsible for the development and implementation of hydrocarbon policies.

(ii) Training and development of specialists in the Petroleum Sectors of both countries *inter-alia,* through seminars, conferences and specialists courses;

(iii) Any other specific form of cooperation and transaction mutually agreed in writing between the Parties.